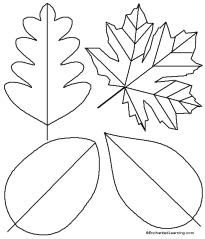


Dear Families,



This week we will start our explorations with leaves and trees, as well as continue our experiments with color – we have color mixing with colored water as one of our experiments. Last week we welcomed a new “member” to our classroom – an 8-foot tall ficus tree! We will be observing the parts of the tree, as well as leaves and seeds with magnifiers. We will also brainstorm on kinds of trees and questions we have about trees. We’ll be reading some fiction and nonfiction books about trees and looking at how illustrators draw trees. We will be working on several art activities with our own tree illustrations. We will be looking at the shape of leaves and trees and finding out about symmetry in math. The children will also be counting and sorting sets of leaves as well.



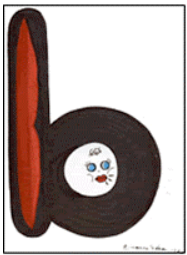
You can help your child study leaves and trees by taking walks in your neighborhood to observe trees and compare how leaves and trees are alike and different. You and your child may think of questions or things you found out about leaves and trees. Please send them to our class. **I would also like your child to gather some leaves for our classroom observations and projects. Please send 4-6 leaves (from trees only) in a small plastic bag.**



We are beginning our “Handwriting Without Tears” program with explorations of wooden letter shapes and magna-doodles. There is an online interactive letter exploration that shows how capital letter formations are made.

The URL is:

http://www.literacycenter.net/letters_en/letters_form_en.asp



Last week we also began working with a special letter program called “Lively Letters”. This is a multisensory program to help children learn letter sounds and other phonemic skills. These skills will help as your child begins the journey into reading and writing. We are learning 1-2 “Lively Letter” stories and songs per week and then will use these when we are writing and reading words. You can find more information here:

<http://www.readingwithtlc.com/Pages/About/livelyletters.htm>

The children **love** to sing these songs and are enjoying a special computer program I’ve created for them.

Enjoy the week!
Charlene Costello

You can find a .pdf version of my most recent newsletter on Beal School’s Message Center:

<http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/District/MessageCenter/Beal/ccostello.pdf>